

Mj 0046/0046

**IN THE DISTRICT OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS
DIVISION OF ST. CROIX**

AFFIDAVIT IN SUPPORT OF COMPLAINT

I, Nathaniel R. Copping, a Special Agent with the Department of Homeland Security, Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Homeland Security Investigations (HSI), being duly sworn, do state:

INTRODUCTION

1. I am employed by Homeland Security Investigations and assigned to the St Croix, United States Virgin Islands office. I have been a Special Agent with HSI since 2015. As a Special Agent, my duties include the investigation of violations of federal laws which relate to the sexual exploitation of children.
2. The facts in this affidavit come from my personal observations and experience, as well as from information obtained from other law enforcement agents and officers. This affidavit does not, however, set forth all of my knowledge about this matter. Rather, this affidavit is submitted for the limited purpose of establishing probable cause to believe that on or about August 16, 2019, Robert BLACK, knowingly attempted to induce a minor to travel within the territory of the United States Virgin Islands for the purpose of engaging in sexual activity in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 2422(b).

PROBABLE CAUSE

3. On August 12, 2019, I and other agents of HSI, initiated a law enforcement operation designed to target and identify adult individuals seeking to make contact with and engage in sexual activity with minors. Agents working online in an undercover capacity, created online personas in online forums and applications designed to facilitate interactions between individuals. In this instance, a profile was created on the application Grindr,

under the name of "DJ".

4. On August 15, 2019, at 2:09 pm, an unknown Grindr profile later associated with BLACK, initiated contact by sending a picture of his naked torso and another of his genitals. The following is a summary of the conversation that ensued:

August 12, 2019

2:09 pm – BLACK: Wasssup

2:29 pm – DJ: Wow

6:32 pm – BLACK: Ur Cute

6:32 pm – BLACK: Let's meet

August 14, 2019

9:29 am – DJ: How old are you?

9:52 am – BLACK: 33

9:52 am – BLACK: And u

9:52 am – BLACK: [BLACK sends picture showing BLACK's face]

11:52 am – DJ: Well...depends...my fake age or real age?

1:10 pm – BLACK: Doesn't matter

1:10 pm – BLACK: Let's meet

1:10 pm – BLACK: I only had sex with one white boy in my life.

1:42 pm – DJ: Do you like young boys?

2:28 pm – BLACK: Yes

2:28 pm – BLACK: That's what I prefer.

...

August 15, 2019

...

12:17 pm – BLACK: Yo we gonna meet or what

12:17 pm – BLACK: I'm not with the games

12:19 pm – DJ: Well I can't drive so I need to try to catch a ride if we meet.

I'm 14.

12:21 pm – BLACK: Dude that's cool

...

12:21 pm – BLACK: 14 is perfect

12:21 pm – BLACK: I'll take you wherever you need to go [smiling emoticon]

...

12:31 pm – DJ: I'm a little nervous. What do you want to do

...

12:33 pm – BLACK: I wanna kiss, get head, suck on ur nipples, and maybe give
you some of this black dick.

12:33 pm – BLACK: What u wanna do

12:33 pm – BLACK: [Black sends picture of his genitals]

...

12:40 pm – DJ: Text me on 4073260861

3:22 pm BLACK: I'm free now Quan

3:22 pm BLACK: 340.201.6776

3:22 pm BLACK: Text me

5. At approximately 4:00 pm on August 15, 2019, BLACK initiated a text message

conversation with telephone number, 407-326-0861, established by agents through a particular computer program designed for use by law enforcement to send and receive text messages and phone calls. During this text message exchange conducted from 340-201-6776, the same number that BLACK had provided on the Grindr application, BLACK arranged to meet DJ the following day.

6. On August 16, 2019, BLACK confirmed the meeting with agents posing as DJ. Via text message, BLACK agreed to meet DJ on the Christiansted Boardwalk. DJ asked BLACK if he should buy condoms from a vending machine. BLACK replied, "I got one".
7. During the text message conversation, BLACK told DJ that he drives a blue Toyota Echo. BLACK said that he would be wearing a "red blue flag" and a gold chain.
8. At approximately 1:00 pm on August 16, 2019, agents arrested a man, wearing a flag-patterned shirt and a gold chain as he left Angry Nate's restaurant on the Christiansted boardwalk. The man was later identified as Robert BLACK.
9. BLACK told agents that he had arrive in a blue Toyota Echo which was parked on a side road near Angry Nate's. BLACK requested that agents to drive the car back to the HSI office.
10. Subsequent record checks conducted by agents revealed that BLACK is a registered sex offender in Missouri.

CONCLUSION

11. For the reasons state above, I believe there is probable cause to believe that on or about August 12, 2019, in the District of the Virgin Islands, BLACK, knowingly attempted to induce a minor to travel within the territory of the United States Virgin Islands for the purpose of engaging in sexual activity in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 2422(b).

Respectfully Submitted,



NATHANIEL R. COPPING
SPECIAL AGENT, HSI

Subscribed and sworn to before me
on August 16, 2019:



THE HONORABLE GEORGE CANNON
UNITED STATES MAGISTRATE JUDGE
DISTRICT OF THE U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS